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Broward Chapter Florida Native Plant Society



First Speaker of new season Sep 11, 7p

"A tale of two weeds: biological control of air potato & Old World climbing fern" Dr Ellen Lake

There is hope in this real world science drama as we struggle to leave space for native plants to thrive in the wild.

2nd Wednesday of September
at the Secret Woods Nature Center at 7 pm

Public Lands Workday at the Secret Woods

Saturday, September 28th
at the Secret Woods Nature Center 9 am to noon

Plants That Thrive with Companions

The urban garden is a perfect place to yield and compromise with nature in making your landscape decisions.

Sometimes I decide to grow a plant and nature says, "no". Disease sets in and it dies. Or I plant in one location, but find that it has reseeded over there. I coax a plant to live in the shade, but it never blooms.



(above: Beach Clustervine by Keith Bradley)

Resist the feeling of betrayal. Nature has been experimenting for 3.8 billion years and knows a lot about gardening. She's just trying to show us how to do it. "Don't grow this plant in your yard." "Put this plant over here." "And move this one into the sun." I'm listening.

We were walking on Delray Beach last weekend where Beachcreeper (*Ernodea littoralis*) was thick and lush. A few weeks before I saw it in Raymond Jungles' Lincoln Road park spilling over the walls. It can really take over, but it looks so healthy and wonderful. We need a few plants that are easy to grow.



Jungles' garden at 1111 Lincoln Road, Miami Beach

Nature has her own ideas for landscaping with Beachcreeper. On Delray Beach Beachcreeper is topped with Beach Clustervine (*Jacquemontia reclinata*), if I have identified it correctly. Not only is Beach Clustervine a South Florida endemic, in the wild it is Federal and State Endangered and Critically Imperiled.

Occasionally you might find it in native nurseries, at our own sales, and used in restoration. I think we can assume that it was planted there on the beach along with the many other cultivated native plants, although it is native in the nearby Spanish River park.



Note the small white flowers on top

Be that as it may, Beach Clustervine is a wonderful tiny vine with beautiful white star flowers. I lovingly coaxed it into accepting my yard. But here on Delray Beach it is amazing! I have never seen it so abundant with hundreds of white stars atop mounds of Beachcreeper. I'm surprised, not only to see so much of it, but to see it out-compete, or more accurately, using Beachcreeper.



Look closely at the dozens of flower buds along the vines

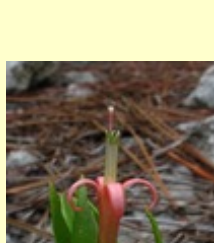
I would think the roots of Beachcreeper would leave no place for Beach Clustervine, or no place where seeds could sprout, but somehow it happens. Beachcreeper provides the perfect structure for the vining Beach Clustervine that wants to be climbing and in the sunshine to bloom. We see many other plants do this, so it is my own limited understanding of landscaping. Perhaps nature is saying, "Don't think of Beach Clustervine as delicate and rare. It's the perfect companion plant for those big, healthy mounds of Beachcreeper."



Less surprisingly, two other vines here are using Beachcreeper: Beach Bean (*Canavalia rosea*, right) and Railroad Vine (*Ipomoea pes-caprae*, above). Years after the original restoration, the plants have worked out where they want to grow and clearly this is a happy arrangement. (photo right: Alan Cressler)



Happy, too, for the urban gardener who realizes that thriving, dense bushes like Beachcreeper can be perfect, non-competing companions for delicate vines. The flowers of Beachcreeper are wonderful, but small (photo right: Alan Cressler). The white stars of Beach Clustervine stand out, as do the pink pea blossoms of Beach Bean, and the wonderful magenta of Railroad Vine. Perhaps you'd like to try Ocean-blue Morningglory (*Ipomoea indica*)?



Look to nature for your landscape ideas and watch to see which plants play well with others.

Send your Comments: Richard@Brownscombe.net

How you know what's happening...

- Use [Coontie.org](#). View the [Calendar](#). Find directions, maps, and routine information on the [Info](#) tab.
- Mark your own calendar for every **2nd Wednesday 7p** for speakers. Field trips are on the following weekends, but they vary, so use the [Calendar](#).
- Write me. We respond to emails, so you can ask: Richard@Brownscombe.net
- Find answers under the [Plants](#) tab. You can't imagine the useful info there until you explore it.

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Protecting & Growing Broward Native Plants